

In the Claims:

There are no amendments to the claims in the present office action response. All pending claims and their present status are produced below.

1. (Original) A method for communicating information between a first seller and buyers in a negotiating room associated with an on-line group-buying sale having featured item, comprising:

receiving the buyers in the negotiating room, wherein the negotiating room provides support for communications about the on-line group-buying sale among the buyers and the first seller;

receiving an initial price for the featured item from the first seller;

initiating the on-line group-buying sale for the first featured item after receiving the initial price from the first seller;

transmitting communications from the buyers to the first seller via the negotiating room, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the featured item;

producing a first flash demand curve for the first featured item unit offers for the first featured item;

providing the first flash demand curve to the first seller; and

receiving a modified price for the first featured item from the first seller.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the on-line group-buying sale has a second featured item associated with a second seller, the method further comprising:

receiving an initial price for the second featured item from the second seller;

initiating the on-line group-buying sale for the second featured item after receiving the initial price from the second seller;

transmitting communications from the buyers to the second seller via the negotiating room, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the second featured item;

producing a second flash demand curve for the second featured item using the offers for the second featured item and providing the second flash demand curve to the second seller; and

receiving a modified price for the second featured item from the second seller.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving a communication from a buyer of the buyers that contains an offer for the first featured item; and

receiving a communication from the same buyer that contains an offer for the second featured item.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the first flash demand curve indicates that the buyer has also made an offer for the second featured item.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an instruction from the first seller that modifies the featured item in the on-line group-buying sale to include at least one additional product/service.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the offers are revocable offers, the method further comprising:

transmitting a message to the buyers stating that subsequently received offers from the buyers will be treated as irrevocable; and

receiving further communications from the buyers, wherein at least some of the communications contain irrevocable offers.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an instruction from the first seller to close the on-line group-buying sale.

8. (Original) A method for determining demand for a featured item in an on-line group-buying sale, comprising:

receiving buyers into a negotiating room, wherein the negotiating room provides communication support between the buyers and a first seller of the featured item;

conducting a first on-line group-buying sale, wherein the first on-line group-buying sale is conducted in association with the buyers in the negotiating room;

producing at least one flash demand curve for the first featured item using offers received from the buyers of the first on-line group-buying sale;

providing the at least one flash demand curve to the first seller, wherein the first seller uses the at least one flash demand curve to create a sale demand curve for the featured item; and

conducting a second on-line group-buying sale of the featured item using the sale demand curve.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

conducting a third on-line group-buying sale, wherein the third on-line group-buying sale is conducted in association with the buyers in the negotiating room;

producing at least another flash demand curve for the featured item using offers received from the buyers of the third on-line group-buying sale; and

providing the at least another flash demand curve to the first seller, wherein the first seller creates the sale demand curve for the featured item using the at least another flash demand curve.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the seller modifies the first featured item during the third on-line group-buying sale to include at least another product/service, the method further comprising:

receiving from the seller an identification of products/services included in the first featured item for the second on-line group-buying sale before conducting the second on-line group-buying sale.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the second on-line group-buying sale begins before the first on-line group-buying sale using a current demand curve, the method further comprising:

replacing the current demand curve for the featured item in the second online group-buying sale with the sale demand curve.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the first on-line group-buying sale includes a second seller and a second featured item, the method further comprising:

providing at least one communication between the buyers and the second seller to the first seller.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

storing the at least one flash demand curve in a data repository.

Claims 14-25 (canceled).

26. (Original) A method for determining a flash demand curve for a featured item offered by a seller in an on-line group-buying sale, comprising:

receiving an initial price for the featured item from the seller;

initiating the on-line group-buying sale for the featured item after receiving the initial price from the seller;

receiving offers for the featured item from buyers, wherein the received offers include prices equal to or less than the initial price;

constructing the flash demand curve; and

providing the flash demand curve to the seller.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

receiving a modified price for the first featured item from the seller after the flash demand curve has been provided to the seller;

displaying the modified price to the buyers;

receiving offers for the featured item from buyers, wherein the received offers include prices equal to or less than the modified price;

constructing the new flash demand curve; and providing the new flash demand curve to the seller.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising:

receiving an instruction to determine a new flash demand curve;

29. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the flash demand curve is constructed by plotting received offers on a graph according to price and cumulative number of offers received at or below each price.

30. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

receiving an instruction to determine the flash demand curve after the initiation of the on-line group-buying sale.

Claims 31-49 (canceled).

50. (Original) A system for determining demand for a featured item offered in an on-line group-buying sale by at least one seller, comprising:

an on-line group-buying mechanism configured to conduct the on-line group-buying sale for the featured item;

a message receiver and transmitter configured to receive buyer communications, wherein at least some of the buyer communications contain offers for the featured item;

a voting mechanism configured to receive the offers from the message receiver and transmitter and calculate a flash demand curve using the offers; and

an operator representative configured to provide the flash demand curve to the at least one seller.

51. (Original) The system of claim 50, further comprising:

an outgoing message transmitter configured to send a message to at least one buyer announcing the beginning of the on-line group-buying sale.

52. (Previously amended) The system of claim 51 wherein the outgoing message transmitter is configured to send the message via at least one of a wireless communications format and a television communications format.

53. (Original) The system of claim 50 wherein the message receiver and transmitter is configured to process buyer communications using at least one of a chat format, an auditorium chat format, a threaded message/newsgroup format, and a message board format.

54. (Original) The system of claim 50, further comprising:

an operator representative configured to announce the initiation of an auditorium chat forum to the buyers over an electronic network.

55. (Original) The system of claim 53, wherein the electronic network is at least one of a cable network, the Internet, and the public switched telephone network.

56. (Original) A system for selling featured items offered by a seller to buyers, comprising:

a negotiating room configured to sell the featured items using an on-line group-buying sale, wherein the negotiating room includes a voting mechanism configured to calculate at least one flash demand curve for the featured items using offers received from the buyers; and

an on-line group-buying mechanism configured to sell the featured items using a sale demand curve developed from the at least one flash demand curve.

57. (Original) The system of claim 56 wherein the negotiating room further comprises:

a message receiver and transmitter configured to receive buyer communications, wherein at least some of the buyer communications contain offers for the featured items.

58. (Original) The system of claim 56 wherein the on-line group-buying mechanism begins selling the featured items using an initial demand curve before the online group-buying sale in the negotiating room begins, the system further comprising:

a seller representative configured to send an instruction to the on-line group-buying mechanism to replace the initial demand curve with the sale demand curve.

Claims 59-65 (canceled).

66. (Original) A data processing system that provides communications between buyers and a first seller during an on-line group-buying sale for a first featured item, the data processing system including negotiating room software executable on the data processing system and configured to transmit communications from the buyers to the first seller, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the first featured item, the data processing system further configured to produce a first flash demand curve for the first featured item using the offers for the first featured item and configured to provide the first flash demand curve to the first seller.

67. (Original) The data processing system of claim 66 wherein the on-line group-buying sale has a second featured item associated with a second seller, the data processing system further configured to transmit communications from the buyers to the second seller, wherein at least some of the communications contain offers for the second featured item; the data processing system further configured to produce a second flash demand curve for the second featured item using the offers for the second featured item and configured to provide the second flash demand curve to the second seller.

68. (Original) The data processing system of claim 66 wherein the data processing system is further configured to receive a modified price for the first featured item from the first seller.

69. (Original) The data processing system of claim 66 wherein the data processing system is further configured to receive an instruction from the first seller that modifies the first featured item in the on-line group-buying sale to include at least one additional product/service.

70. (Original) A data processing system that determines demand for a featured item during an on-line group-buying sale, the data processing system including negotiating room software executable on the data processing system and configured to initiate a first on-line group-buying sale, wherein the first on-line group-buying sale is conducted in association with buyers and a seller, the data processing system further configured to produce at least one flash demand curve for the featured item using offers received from the buyers of the first on-line group-buying sale, configured to provide the at least one flash demand curve to the seller, wherein the seller uses the at least one flash demand curve to create a sale demand curve for the featured item, and configured to initiate a second on-line group-buying sale of the featured item using the sale demand curve.

Claims 71-76. (canceled).

77. (Previously Added) A negotiating room system for facilitating communications among and between buyers and a seller during an on-line group-buying sale, the system comprising:

a product database containing product information for a plurality of products;

a negotiating room associated with a product described in the product database, and adapted to receive and display messages from buyers and a seller;

a display interface adapted to display product information about the product concurrently with messages in the negotiating room from buyers and the seller and further adapted to receive online group-buying offers from the buyers to purchase the product; and

a commerce server adapted to receive the on-line group-buying offers to purchase the product from the display interface.

78. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, adapted to receive from the seller changes in the price of the product during the online group-buying sale.

79. (Previously Added) The system of claim 78, further adapted to receive a first price at a first quantity and a second price at a second quantity wherein the first price is higher than the second price and the first quantity is lower than the second quantity.

80. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, wherein the commerce server is further adapted to receive an acceptance of the on-line group-buying offer at a price and to transmit the acceptance at the price to the display interface to be displayed to all buyers accessing the display interface.

81. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, wherein the display interface is further configured to receive an instruction from the seller modifying the product during the on-line group-buying sale by adding at least one of a good and a service to the product.

82. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, wherein the display interface is further adapted to display a demand curve for the product representing a plurality of prices of the product associated with a plurality of quantities of the product.

83. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, wherein the display interface is further adapted to display a curve for the product generated based on on-line group-buying offers made for the product.

84. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, wherein the display interface is further adapted to display an offer curve for the product including a price axis and a quantity axis wherein the curve is determined by the seller before an on-line group-buying sale.

85. (Previously Added) The system of claim 83, wherein the curve for the product represents either of the quantity of product demanded or the number of offers received, over a fixed interval of time.

86. (Previously Added) The system of claim 77, wherein the display interface is further adapted to display a table containing a plurality of prices of the product associated with a plurality of quantities of the product.

87. (Previously Added) A method of facilitating communications among and between buyers and a seller during an on-line group-buying sale, the method comprising:

storing product information for a plurality of products offered in on-line group-buying sales;

receiving and displaying messages from buyers and a seller about a product offered in the on-line group-buying sale;

displaying product information about the product concurrently with the messages from buyers and the seller;

receiving online group-buying offers from the buyers to purchase the product; and  
executing an on-line group-buying sale of the product at a same price.

88. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising receiving from the seller changes in the price of the product during the online group-buying sale.

89. (Previously Added) The method of claim 88, further comprising receiving a first price at a first quantity and a second price at a second quantity wherein the first price is higher than the second price and the first quantity is lower than the second quantity.

90. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising receiving an acceptance of the on-line group-buying offer at a price and displaying the acceptance to buyers at a same price.

91. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising receiving an instruction from the seller to modify the product during an on-line group-buying sale by adding at least one of a good and a service to the product.

92. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising displaying a demand curve for the product representing a plurality of prices of the product associated with a plurality of quantities of the product.

93. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising displaying a curve for the product generated based on on-line group-buying offers made for the product.

94. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising displaying an offer curve for the product including a price axis and a quantity axis wherein the curve is determined by the seller before an on-line group-buying sale.

95. (Previously Added) The method of claim 93, further comprising displaying a curve for the product that represents either of the quantity of product demanded or the number of offers received, over a fixed interval of time.

96. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87, further comprising displaying a table containing a plurality of prices of the product associated with a plurality of quantities of the product.

97. (Previously Added) A graphical user interface for an on-line group-buying commerce system, the system executed on at least one computer system, the graphical user interface comprising:

a first display area for displaying a description of a product offered in an online group-buying sale provided by the on-line group-buying commerce system;

a second display area for receiving a selection indicating an offer to purchase the product;

a third display area displaying real-time messages sent by buyers and a seller related to the product; and

a fourth display area displaying an input interface in which a user may enter a message

related to the product to be displayed in the second display area; the first, second, third, and fourth display areas concurrently displayed in the graphical user interface.

98. (Previously Added) The graphical user interface of claim 97, wherein the first display area is configured to display at least two different prices for the product during the on-line group-buying sale.

99. (Previously Added) The graphical user interface of claim 97, the graphical user interface further comprising a fifth display area for displaying a demand curve generated based on offers for the product, the fifth display area concurrently displayed with the other display areas.

100. (Previously Added) The graphical user interface of claim 97, the graphical user interface comprising a fifth display area for displaying a summary of on-line group-buying offers for the product, the fifth display area concurrently displayed with the other display areas.

101. (Previously Added) The graphical user interface of claim 97, further comprising a display for displaying one of a representation of a zoom, modify, update, refresh, or accept function.

102. (Previously Added) The graphical user interface of claim 97, further comprising an interface by which wherein an user may make a selection indicating a request from a buyer to communicate directly with the seller.

103. A method for displaying data on a display device in support of an on-line group-buying sale, comprising:

displaying a description of a product offered in the online group-buying sale provided by the on-line group-buying commerce system;

receiving a selection indicating an offer to purchase the product;

displaying real-time messages sent by buyers and a seller related to the product; and

receiving a message related to the product to be displayed through an input interface.

104. (Previously Added) The method of claim 103, further comprising simultaneously displaying the description of the product offered, real-time messages sent by buyers related to the product, and an input interface for receiving a message related to the product.

105. (Previously Added) The method of claim 103, further comprising displaying a demand curve generated based on offers for the product.

106. (Previously Added) The method of claim 103, further comprising displaying a summary of on-line group-buying offers for the product.

107. (Previously Added) The method of claim 103, further comprising displaying one of a representation of a zoom, modify, update, refresh, or accept function.

108. (Previously Added) The method of claim 103, further comprising receiving a selection indicating a request from a buyer to communicate directly with the seller.

109. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 103.

110. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 104.

111. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 105.

112. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 106.

113. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 107.

114. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 108.

115. (Previously Added) A computer program product, comprising computer executed code, stored on a computer accessible medium, and executed by at least one processor to perform the method of claim 109.

116. (Previously Added) The method of claim 87 further comprising displaying data on a display device in support of the on-line group-buying sale, the method comprising:

- displaying real-time messages sent by buyers and a seller related to the product;
- displaying a demand curve generated based on offers for the product; and
- receiving a message related to the product to be displayed through an input interface.

117. (Previously Added) A negotiating room system for facilitating communications among and between buyers and a seller during an on-line group-buying sale, the system comprising:

- means for storing product information for a plurality of products offered in on-line group-buying sales;

- means for receiving and displaying messages from buyers and a seller about a product offered in the on-line group-buying sale;

- means for displaying product information about the product concurrently with the messages from buyers and the seller;

- means for receiving online group-buying offers from the buyers to purchase the product; and

- means for executing the on-line group-buying sale of the product at a same price.

118. (Previously Added) The system of claim 117, further comprising means for receiving from the seller changes in the price of the product during the online group-buying sale.

119. (Previously Added) The system of claim 117, further comprising means for receiving a first price at a first quantity and a second price at a second quantity wherein the first price is higher than the second price and the first quantity is lower than the second quantity.

120. (Previously Added) The system of claim 117, further comprising means for receiving an acceptance of the on-line group-buying offer at a price and displaying the acceptance to buyers at a same price.

121. (Previously Added) The system of claim 117, further comprising means for receiving an instruction from the seller to modify the product during an on-line group-buying sale by adding at least one of a good and a service to the product.